

In the Claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for examining a pruritic disease to diagnose opioid-based pruritis, comprising the steps of:

measuring concentrations of ~~at least one~~ κ -opioid peptides and ~~at least one~~ δ -opioid peptide, μ -opioid peptides, ~~or nociceptin in blood cells, body fluid, or tissue~~ in serum,

calculating the ratio of said concentrations of ~~at least one of~~ δ -opioid peptides, μ -opioid peptides, ~~and nociceptin~~ to the concentration of κ -opioid peptides,

comparing said calculated ratio to a corresponding ratio in non-pruritic patients; and

diagnosing opioid-based pruritis where said calculated ratio is greater than said corresponding ratio.

2. – 3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said μ -opioid peptide to be measured is β -endorphin and said κ -opioid peptide is dynorphin A.

5. (Cancelled)

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said pruritic disease is selected from the group consisting of pruritus with atopic dermatitis, neurodermatitis, contact dermatitis, seborrheic dermatitis, autosensitization dermatitis, caterpillar dermatitis, asteatosis, senile pruritus, insect bite, hyperesthesia optica, urticaria, prurigo, herpes, impetigo, eczema, tinea, lichen, psoriasis, scabies, acne vulgaris, malignant tumor, diabetes, hepatic disease, renal failure, hemodialysis, peritoneal dialysis or pregnancy.

7. - 11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein said pruritic disease is selected from the group consisting of atopic dermatitis, renal failure, hemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis.

13. (Previously Presented) A method for diagnosing the presence of a pruritic disease, comprising the steps of:

measuring concentrations of at least one κ -opioid peptide and at least one of δ -opioid peptide, μ -opioid peptide, or nociceptin in blood cells, body fluid, or tissue,

calculating the ratio of said concentrations of at least one of δ -opioid peptides, μ -opioid peptides, and nociceptin to the concentration of κ -opioid peptides,

comparing said calculated ratio to a corresponding ratio in non-pruritic patients; and

diagnosing the presence of pruritic disease where said calculated ratio is greater than said corresponding ratio.